

Remarks

A. Specification and Drawings

1. The Examiner has objected to the drawings because reference numeral 52 in Figs. 4-5 was not mentioned in the description. In the specification, paragraphs [0016] has been amended to account for reference element 52 in Figs. 4-5.

2. The Examiner also objected to the drawings because the longitudinal members in claim 15 were not identified by a reference element in the drawings. Figs. 4-5 have been amended to add a reference to the longitudinal members, now identified by element 54. Paragraph [0016] has also been amended to provide a reference to longitudinal members 54 now referenced in Figs. 4-5.

3. Paragraph [0017] has been amended to clarify that the first and second sides of the bracket have inner surfaces 20A, 30A and outer surfaces 20B, 30B. Figs. 1-2 have also been amended to provide reference to the inner and outer surfaces 20A, 30A and 20B, 30B.

4. Paragraph [0021] has been amended to clarify an example of "bilaminar."

Since all amended figures have been amended to provide references to elements that were originally present in the drawings as filed, the applicant asserts that no new matter has been added.

B. Claims

Claims 1-21 remain in this application. Claims 1, 14, 15, 16, and 21 have been amended.

1. Claims 1-4, 6, and 8-13

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6, and 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Morris, U.S. Patent No. 4,032,242. Claims 2-13 ultimately depend from claim 1. Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the dimples form a recess on the inner surface of the bracket and a projection on the outer surface of the bracket. As illustrated in Morris Figs. 2, and 5, the “dimples” in Morris do not form a projection on the outer surface. As such, the applicant asserts that the “dimples” in Morris are more akin to countersunk screw holes that facilitate the screw head being flush with the surrounding material when the screw is fully installed.

Claim 1 as amended requires the dimples to form a projection on the outer surfaces of the first and second sides. It is clear from the specification and drawings of the present invention that these dimples 24 in the first and second sides of the bracket perform a different function than the “dimples” in Morris. Dimples 24, as explained in paragraph [0018], provide additional strength to the joint between frame members because the dimples 24 are nestible within corresponding dimples in the frame members. As such, the applicant requests prompt allowance of claims 1-4, 6, and 8-13.

2. Claim 14

The Examiner has rejected claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by Morris, U.S. Patent No. 4,032,242. Claim 14 as amended requires, in addition to other features,

a third side that is at least partially bilaminar, having one layer extending from the first side, and a second layer extending from the second side. The at least partially bilaminar third side not only provides distinct advantages during manufacture of the bracket, but also increases the strength of the third side. Such a bilaminar third side is not shown, described, or suggest in Morris, and therefore the applicant asserts that claim 14 is allowable.

It is noted that claim 17 (not amended herein) requires a bilaminar third side. As such, the applicant respectfully asserts that claim 17 is allowable for the additional reasons as discussed with respect to claim 14.

2. Claims 5 and 7

The Examiner has rejected claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Morris. Claims 5 and 7 ultimately depend from claim 1. Since the applicant asserts that claim 1 as amended is allowable over Morris, the applicant respectfully asserts that claims 5 and 7 are also allowable over Morris.

3. Claims 15-20

The Examiner has rejected claims 15-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiss, UK Patent No. 2,044,193 in view of Morris. Claims 16-20 depend from claim 15, and claim 21 is independent.

The applicant has amended claim 15 to clarify that the outer surfaces of the bracket comprise projections. Neither Hiss nor Morris disclose a bracket having projections on an outer

Ser. No. 10/081,254
Response to Office Action of 4 October 2003
Atty Docket 6523-54

surface thereof. As such, the applicant respectfully asserts that claims 15-20 are allowable over the combination of Hiss and Morris.

4. Claim 21

The Examiner has rejected claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Hiss in view of Morris. Claim 21 as amended requires dimples in the first and second sides of the bracket that are in nested engagement with corresponding dimples in the trailer frame members. Additionally, claim 21 requires the third side of the bracket to be substantially bilaminar.

Neither Hiss nor Morris show, suggest, or describe a bracket as required in claim 21 attached to a trailer frame, wherein the bracket has dimples that are in nested engagement with corresponding dimples in the frame members. As such, the applicant asserts that claim 21 is allowable over the art of record.

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

HAHN, LOESER & PARKS LLP



W. Edward Crooks
Reg. No. 51,124
1225 West Market Street
Akron, OH 44313
Telephone: (330) 864-5550
Facsimile: (330) 864-7986
E-mail: wcrooks@hahnlaw.com